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LETTER DATED 13 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 12 February 1999 from Mr. Tariq Aziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq. The Minister calls attention to the fact that the United States and the United Kingdom are continuing to implement their policy of aggression against Iraq, which constitutes a dangerous precedent in international relations and a breach of the norms and covenants governing such relations, and he urges you to request the Security Council to bring an end to unlawful actions that undermine the Council's role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Letter dated 12 February 1999 from the Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to inform you that the United States and the United Kingdom are still intent on implementing their policy of brutal aggression against the people, Government, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. This policy has been embodied in the series of operations and blatant acts of aggression in which they engage on a daily basis in a manner that poses a grave threat not only to Iraq but to peace and security in the region and in the world as a whole, thereby subverting every norm of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations.

United States and British aircraft have continued their stepped-up violations of Iraq's airspace in the north and south of the country from the military bases established in Saudi, Kuwaiti and Turkish territory for the purpose of enforcing the no-flight zones whose imposition is intrinsically a measure extraneous to the law and one that has no international legitimacy. As you well know and as the whole world is aware, it was the United States and British Administrations that proceeded to impose these zones in accordance with the dictates of their own interests and the achievement of their own objectives in Iraq and in the region. These are objectives that bear no relation to the resolutions of the Security Council or to the principles of international law.

Day after day, events prove the existence of this policy of aggression against Iraq. There are the continuing intensive strikes being carried out by United States and British aircraft against numerous Iraqi civilian localities, including cities, residential neighbourhoods and populated areas, and the most recent of these has been the strike against residential neighbourhoods in the city of Basrah on the morning of 25 January 1999. In its issue for 31 January 1999, The Washington Post published an article containing the following statement concerning these strikes:

> "It's a way of pursuing an objective in a way that everyone's comfortable with", said a senior Administration official involved in the decision-making. "You get things done without rocking any boats. If we started a broad bombing campaign people would say, 'What provoked this?'"

It appears from this statement that, having seen the whole world's condemnation of the assault it launched against Iraqi territory in which it failed to achieve its main objective of changing the national regime in Iraq, the United States then began planning to engage in military operations of a different type involving low-intensity, high-technology strikes to enable it, in the long term, to achieve its objectives without arousing inter-Arab and international public opinion against it.

This policy has also been proclaimed by the Acting Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Ambassador A. Peter Burleigh, who stated in an interview with the newspaper Al-Hayat on 5 February 1999 that

United States policy was to replace the regime in the long term. He also said that they would persist in maintaining the no-flight zones, and that if others in the Security Council found that that was unacceptable to them or that they did not like it, then that was their opinion and their decision.

The statement of the United States ambassador clearly shows the contempt in which the United States Administration holds the will of the international community and, in particular, the other States members of the Security Council that reject this policy as being incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and with the function it assigns to the Council.

Silence on the part of the United Nations in the face of these actions by the United States and the United Kingdom would have dangerous repercussions for international peace and security, in that it would represent the beginning of the collapse of the collective security system enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It would also constitute a dangerous precedent in international relations and would violate the norms and covenants that govern such relations, chief among them the peremptory norm of international law requiring non-interference in the internal affairs of States. This norm is affirmed in Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter of the United Nations, and it does not allow even the United Nations itself to interfere in affairs that pertain to the core of the internal authority of States.

As it calls your attention to the dangerous phenomenon created by the actions of a permanent member of the Security Council in full view of the entire world, the Government of Iraq expresses the hope that you will take the initiative of urging the Security Council to meet all the responsibilities assigned to it under the Charter of the United Nations and to bring an end to the unlawful actions of the United States and the United Kingdom that are undermining its role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Government of Iraq reserves in full its right under international law to protect the safety of its people, its airspace and its territorial integrity and to seek full compensation for all the human, material and other losses sustained by the people of Iraq both from the aggressor countries and from those countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Turkey that facilitate the aggression and participate in it by making their air bases available for use by attacking aircraft.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Tariq AZIZ
Deputy Prime Minister
Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs